This proposal is by far my favorite. I am 44 years old, and have been a radio amateur for 31 years. While the FCC may not adopt this proposal in its entirety, each part of it should be given serious consideration.

In particular, the current exam system is a joke, as the published answers can easily be memorized. I know, because this is how I passed both my Advanced and my Extra. Yes it is true that the FAA uses a similar system, however, a passing grade on the FAA written gets you an appointment for a face to face oral exam followed by an actual flight test in an airplane. The FAA written exam alone, does NOT get you ANY license or rating. It is simply the first step in a three step process. No College or University that I know of publishes the answers to their final exams.

The "open book" tests have led to many hams becoming "Extra" class hams a few weeks after getting their initial license. There have also been cases of 8 year olds passing the Extra class exam. The current "incentive" licensing structure is in reality quite flat, with little difference between license classes because memorization is all you need. I speak from experience, because I passed both my advanced and my extra simply by memorizing the answers the night before the test. I highlighted only the correct answers, and then ignored the incorrect ones. The next day, the correct ones looked familiar, so I selected them. In both cases, I passed the test. The experience did not leave me with a lasting feeling of achievement.

While everyone points to how hard the content is on the exams, the reality is that they are very easily passed by memorization. Gordon West's (WB6NOA) book available from the W5YI group is very effective at helping you through the exams without actually learning anything. It tells you how to work the exam problems without needing to understand them. The FCC needs to examine the Gordon West series of license guides as this series is designed to turn a difficult exam into a "piece of cake".

Regardless of what ever else the FCC decides on, please stop the "open book" tests.

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